



ENABLING FORMAL EDUCATION FOR KLANICA CHILDREN

(Grant Number 165-G-00-03-00101)

Final Report

Skopje, August 2004

On December 20th 2002, the Mission of the US Agency for International Development (USAID) approved the Enabling Formal Education for Klanica Children Project, under the USAID Grant Number 165-G-00-03-00101-00 which provided 48,930 usd in grant funds to Foundation Open Society Institute Macedonia to provide educational support to Roma children in one of the most disadvantage Roma communities in Macedonia. Additional 15,000 USD were awarded for this project in July 2003 for continuation of the project activities till March 2004. The project is implemented by the NGO "Soncogledi" from Skopje.

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

- I. Introduction of the Implementing Organisation
- II. Project's Background and Description
- III. Project Objectives
- IV. Project Team
- V. Evaluation on:
 - 1. Kindergarten/Preschool
 - 2. Catch-up Program
 - 3. Tutoring
 - 4. Free Activities
 - 5. Parental involvement
- VI. Expected and Accomplished Results
- VII. Conclusions and Suggestions

I. Introduction of the Implementing Organisation:

Soncoaledi Mission Statement

Soncogledi, a non-profit, non-political and non-religious organization, celebrates the diversity of the lives and cultures of the Balkan region. Through play, art, sport, cultural activities and collaboration with volunteers from around the world, we promote tolerance, understanding and serve the communities within which we live.

SONCOGLEDI is a local NGO, part of the Balkan Sunflowers Network (BSF) – international grassroots volunteer organization which has been since April 1999 working in many diverse social, educational, cultural projects, as well as reconstruction and environmental programs etc. in the countries of the Balkans i.e. Kosovo, Serbia, Macedonia and Albania. Based on volunteer work, BSF works together with local and international volunteers who contribute with their time, motivation and experience. Besides being one of the most cost-effective organizations, with that kind of the approach towards humanitarian work, BSF manages to create very close relationships with the people and community working for. Further more, BSF Network has a great amount of successful experience with integration projects with very encouraging results.

SONCOGLEDI was established in the summer of year 2001 by local volunteers of BSF, who wanted to have a larger input in BSF work, to take over and develop current BSF projects and set up the new ones. We work with the same philosophy as BSF in that we welcome volunteers from around the world to work with local volunteers as friends and neighbours. Since BSF's history in Macedonia has mostly been work with Roma population, our aim was to develop those activities further and design a program with focus on Romani education.

In March 2003 our team of workers started with "Enabling Formal Education to Klanica Children" (EFEKC) project that targeted Roma children and youngsters from Klanica – one of the poorest and most isolated Roma settlements in Skopje. We organized an educational centre for the children age from 3 to 16. Every day program that includes kindergarten (pre-school), catch-up classes, free-activities and tutoring provides basic education and school assistance to between 60-80 children from that environment. Program also involves parents and contacts and networking with Braka Miladinovci local school.

Our presence in Klanica, however, stretches further than running an informal educational centre. We're also working inside the settlement and are giving support to the whole community. By implementing the positive views for Klanica children's future, in cooperation with the parents we're trying to overcome as many obstacles of Roma education as possible.

After almost three years of the involvement with Klanica, we can recognize that our work has been successful and appreciated by the community in many ways. Besides encouraging the families to educate their young ones and offering them the preparatory and assistance program, our volunteers usually end up as their friends and as someone who's trying to solve at least some of the complex problems that are part of Roma reality (unemployment, social injustice, illiteracy, exclusively bad living conditions, rejection and exclusion, discrimination etc.) At the same time, the interaction with the international volunteer workers from around the world is a positive acquaintance with the great variety of cultures and lifestyles as well as with skills, professions and career choices they might otherwise not have encountered.

Working closely with BSF Kosovo, who contributes to our project with their experience, international volunteers and the use of their facilities, we hope to give to Klanica and the children of Klanica much more structured path for their future. As it's implicated in the name of our organisation – "Balkan Sunflowers" or SONCOGLEDI – our orientation is never ending looking to and for the Sun.

II. Project's Background and Description:

Roma communities have suffered disproportionately in the political and economic changes that have resulted after the fall of communism. While communist policies towards the Roma were far from adequate, the bottom line in terms of social provision was still there. This line now no longer exists. Even though in terms of recognition of minority rights positive developments have taken place in these countries, Roma remain at the bottom of the society. Further more, due to lacking any previous claim to land, with limited political representation and with little influence in the new "civil societies", their situation in the post-communist era worsened.

Roma in Macedonia face difficulties in all spheres of life: employment and economic activities, health, education, accommodation and vocational opportunities. In order to help the social integration of the Roma population, the Macedonian government has done very little and currently there's a lack of measures for a long-term Roma integration strategy.

Soncogledi recognized the need of getting involved with the Roma communities that are scattered around Skopje and are basically the poorest of the poor. We established contacts with Klanica community that is located in the east south part of the town. This particular Roma settlement is known for collecting waste recyclable material (paper, plastic, metal etc.) around town and making basic living out from that by selling it at the nearby buyer - Komuna. Even though the settlement has existed for decades, many of the

people from Klanica happen to be there temporary, only for making some quick cash and then usually move on...

Klanica is located on two sides of the Vardar River, so one part of the settlement belongs to municipality Kisela Voda and the other to municipality Gazi Baba. Most of the houses are made with scrap metal and cardboard, have no electricity or running water and a serious hygiene problem is apparent. Since the settlement's surrounding is being transformed into a modern higher-class neighborhood, there're many cases of the local authorities claiming the land and the settlement is under constant threat of destruction.

Even though the number of Klanica population is variable, there are approximately 70 families living there full time. Which means that the children who live there have to deal with all of the above mentioned every day. They're isolated, marginalized, poor and marked with the lack of opportunity right from the start. Due to almost no hygiene possibilities – most of them wash in the Vardar River - many of the children have serious skin problems at the very early age, as well as lung diseases, eye and ear infections etc. Most of them, especially boys, are every day helping their parents gathering scraps from dumpsters, or beg for money on the street corners and at traffic lights. Very few of the children go to school, many of them even if they start going, there's a very high chance of dropping out after a year or two...

Soncogledi's awareness that the most basic key to an alternative for those children however is education – at least it is most obvious and effective response to begin breaking the cycle in which these children are caught – lead us to setting up the program with which we could overcome obstacles to education of Roma and help children from Klanica either enter or keep attending regular Macedonian primary schools.

The EFEKC program consists of two phases: 1. Constant research of Klanica community (how many permanent residents it has, how many children are going to school, how many don't and why, how many were going to school and why they stopped etc.) 2. Implementation of the educational program through the day educational center, which is run by local and international project coordinator, project coordinator assistant, Roma project assistant/translator, two catch-up teachers (Roma and Macedonian), kindergarten teacher (Macedonian), and local assistants (during the project the number changed from 10 to 7).

Since Sonocgledi's day center is dislocated from Klanica (10-15 minutes car ride), our Roma driver picks up children from Klanica every day and brings them to our school. Together with the Roma translator, a Roma driver serves

as every day link with the community and reports about the needs, questions and problems.

There're 5 basic components of the program that the team is running:

- 1. Kindergarten (Preschool Program)
- 2. Catch-up Program
- 3. Tutoring
- 4. Free Activities
- 5. Parental involvement

This technical report covers activities of the "Enabling Formal Education for Klanica Children" (EFEKC) project from mid March 2003 till end of May 2004.

III. Project's Objectives:

(A) General Objectives:

The overall objective of the EFEKC project is to design an educational program for the children of Klanica that will successfully prepare them for either entry into the Macedonian educational system or ensure the participation of those who're already going to school and there for enable them easier social integration in the Macedonian society, justice and equality of social opportunities.

(B) Specific Objectives:

- 1. Through the education of their children to facilitate the integration of the Klanica population into Macedonian Society.
- 2. To increase the number of Klanica children who enter and stay in main-stream education system.
- 3. Through our preschool program to prepare children to begin school at the same stage as their Macedonian peers (through socialization process, learning basic rules and hygiene habits etc).
- 4. To provide some basic literacy level for those children who never attended regular school.
- To determine class level and ability of those who dropped out from the regular school and to prepare them for re-entering by providing Catchup classes.
- 6. To encourage, raise and support the parent's commitment to children's education.

- 7. To start campaigning for bigger support to Roma inclusion and education within Macedonian governmental structures.
- 8. To stimulate positive public attitudes towards Roma.
- 9. To initiate and improve communication between all relevant factors in the Roma inclusion process.
- 10. To increase Roma access to information about their better understanding of their rights and use of the local structures.
- 11. Implementation of voluntarism.

IV. Project Team:

Country Coordinator: Filip Torteski

Local Project Coordinator: Nenad Gjorgjevski

International Project Coordinator: Marijana Podhraski

Project Coordinator Assistant: Igor Nikolovski Local Project Assistant/Translator: Nedzat Asan

Project's Driver/Facilitator: Kani Ramadani Catch-up Teacher (1): Deniza Memedova Catch-up Teacher (2): Valentina Minovska Kindergarten Teacher: Liljana Pochepova

Project Assistant (1): Kristina Veskova Project Assistant (2): Daniela Tanceva

Project Assistant (3): Aleksandra Spirova

Project Assistant (4): Jelena Joneva Project Assistant (5): Ankica Ilik

Project Assistant (6): Emilija Nikolova

Project Assistant (7): Dragana Golubovik

V. Evaluation on:

1. Kindergarten/Preschool

"Happy Hearts" is the name of the kindergarten program that is open to children age from 3-6 and includes the preschool education preparation program (6-7). Program and the methods of both – kindergarten and preschool activities are inspired by Open Society Institute's "Step by Step" Program. Monday through Friday activities are being performed by Macedonian professional teacher and supported by 7 assistants (most of them are students of Pedagogic and Social Work), with additional assistance from one Roma language speaker assistant.

The kindergarten program is focused on building up children's social skills and initiate their creativity, where as through preschool program we're encouraging and preparing children to begin with the regular school at the same time and at fairly similar level as their Macedonian peers.

From the very beginning we were aware of the children's background living conditions and how much influence that might have on the implementation of the project. At least during the beginning phase... The children of Klanica are exposed to life at its worse form. The isolation and marginalization of the settlement influences their behaviour very much. They're used to spend most of the day outside playing by the river, some of them without even proper clothes and barefoot. With almost no contact with their Macedonian peers and at home speaking exclusively Roma, the chance for them to learn Macedonian is very small. For those who're already going around the town and work with their parents, the problem of course is how to get them to school in the first place. Secondly, even if they might be interested, you can't expect them to be so committed and be a regular part of the group...

Though before hand having to deal with all of these questions, the team managed to succeed in creating a fair regular and fixed group of children. There was a certain drop out after first couple of months. But as the program went on, we accepted some new children in the group. The number was always variable, but set somewhere between 15 and 25. The kindergarten/preschool group has always been quite open to Klanica children though. But to those who wanted to be part of the program just on regular occasions, we had to explain about its seriousness and that with the learning it's also important to understand the concept of the every day participation necessary for the children's future school commitment.

When the group of little children age fro 3-7 first started to come to the day centre, it was very difficult for them to realize what was going on. They were used of our volunteers coming to Klanica and playing with them there. We told the parents we were taking their children to our program outside the settlement and since they knew us and trusted us, they thought it was fine. We also told them that this was going to be preparation for the "real" school, but it was evident that most of them agreed to let their children join just for the sake of having some time off from them.

There has been a long period of adaptation and socialization in the group. Concentration in the beginning was minimal. The children were distracted by everything, the space, new people at the school but mostly by the toys and playing materials. Because of the lack of such a possession, toys are understandably great treasure for them and we couldn't stop them from grabbing from the shelves and each other's hands. They mostly didn't know

how to handle them without breaking some parts, quite often they were also biting them and hitting one another with them...

The beginning period of the kindergarten was more focused on letting them play: alone, with each other and with our assistants. It was meant for "touching the ground", getting to know everything, being introduced to the concept of one room activity, the teacher's role, and most important - their role within all of the that.

Once the overwhelming feeling over coming to this "great new place" calmed down a bit, we moved on to introducing them to basic rules. One of the first one however was explaining to them, why is it important to take their shoes off before entering and the most important – why to wash their/our hands and faces! There was never one single exception with that, even though with 25 children it certainly takes some time. We also realized there was no habit of saying hello when coming to school and entering the classes. Words like: Please, I'm sorry, may I', thank you etc. didn't exist in their world, so we were focusing on that a lot. The progress with that was evident quite fast and as the program was running, it was a great joy to see the children greeting everyone who would come in. Then the other rules started to be introduced: never leave the room without asking first, keeping quite when the teacher or anybody else in the group is talking, raising hands when we have group discussions etc.

Aggression was often manifested, also bad language and indiscipline. We learned that some families "don't match", as they say in Klanica and there for children are often lead to improper behaviour towards each other on the playground and at school. We recognized the aggression as one of the more important problems and tried to do something about it. Our visits to Klanica showed us that in many cases hitting and shouting were the leading ways of communication from parents to the children. But on contrary, we learned that the children are those who're dictating whether they want to go to school or not and in such cases there's no force from the parent's part. This made us a bit confused, they were sometimes children and sometimes grown-ups...

Some of the aggression however can also be a result of the tiredness of working on the streets.

Slowly we were learning more and more about them and vice versa. The group identity started to show, if there was a new child who wanted to join, the children told us immediately about him/her and expressed their opinion about how she/him would fit in.

Besides the socialization, integration and social skill development, greatest deal of the program was devoted to learning Macedonian through playing, talking and all the other activities we were performing.

Here are the basic components of the program:

- Macedonian language/alphabet
- Social skills, social habits and hygiene
- Cooperative games, play and activity
- Games designed for intellectual and creative thinking stimulation
- Numbers counting and use
- Arts and crafts
- Self confidence-building and self-expression

It's worth emphasizing that the children were very excited and interested about participating our kindergarten/preschool activities right from the start. That feeling gave us strength and motivation for further work. We wanted the program to be taken as an obligation and not only an experience, fun time and time away from Klanica life. When we reached the point of seeing the same faces coming back every day, we knew that the development of the program has a great chance of proving successful...

As it's quite known, the music and games are always present in everyday life of the Roma. So our time spent together with the group has always been very musical and full of dancing and playing. With being so open towards their culture, we gained their sympathies and lots of their trust. Many of the children got attached to volunteers and to coming to the activities every day. But they especially got attached to Lile - the teacher. They started to understand her role more and more, she was the one to tell them what to do, what's right and what's wrong, there for she was taken seriously - as a pedagogue and their friend. On some occasions the children would bring her presents or flowers, which shows how much she integrated into their lives. Children accepting her and liking her so much certainly had a great impact on our further role with the whole community. That was manifested the best through a situation we had at school. As it was mentioned earlier, we noticed right from the beginning that there was some dividing going on between the Klanica families from left and right side of the river, and it influences a lot relations between the children in the group. Even though it was quite of sensitive issue, with the trust that she had through the children, Lile could play a mediator and talk openly to families about the bad consequences of that situation on the children. She also knew how to approach children's mothers, get their attention and trust, so they would also tell her openly about their problems.

Back to the school program, as it went on, it was notable that expressing personal thoughts was particularly hard for the children and we tried to encourage them to speak up their mind about everything. Sometimes while playing in a group, we would raise a certain question such us "Who likes it when there's Sun outside and why?" We practised that individually while the

children would be colouring their colour-books or drawing. We would make them talk about their every day life, about what they do, where they sleep, how many members of the families they have, what they want to be become when they grow up etc. The questions and answers were playing a great part in learning Macedonian: "What are you wearing today?" What's the colour of the sky?" Who's the tallest in the group?" etc.

Memorizing a poem or a song was slow, most of the reason for that went to language barrier. There for we devoted a lot of time only to memorizing, repeating and reciting. We managed to learn quite a lot of songs, especially the ones from the "Golden Nightingale Children's Songs Festival". They loved the songs very much and have learned all of them (2 CDs) by heart.

The progress in their narrating abilities showed that they're rehearsing the school material at home, with or without their parent's involvement. By the end of the last year (2003) our group was already a little class and the program was building up through games and songs, and group-discussions, individual work, workshops, theatre, art etc.

Since the aim of the pre-school program is preparing the older children from the group (6 and 7 years) for entering regular school's kindergarten or first grade, our next phase was intensive work towards that direction. After the beginning phase of creating a group, reaching fair regularity, setting up and learning basic rules, getting to know each other etc., we split up the group into smaller and bigger. While the bigger group was working in the classroom, learning intensively the letters and the numbers, the smaller ones were playing, drawing, learning and practising Macedonian vocabulary. At the same time we were more and more focusing on individual approach. Since we were already familiar with children's personal characteristics, we could recognize their personal needs and troubles much faster.

Due to their parent's lack of involvement in the whole process, we didn't have clear information about how they feel about their children's (further) education. Most of the children's parents are illiterate and uneducated, there for we decided to use this as an argument for sending their children to school. We also decided that when the school enrolment begins to assist them in any sort of way. We did have two of the girls from our program entering regular pre-school program at the nearby "Braka Miladinovci" primary school last September (Memet Fatima and Memet Zarife). But as we were informed later, they were not coming in regularly and at some point they both started to come back to our program. When asked why they're not attending regular school their answer was that no one wants to play with them. We tried to talk to the parents, but the answer was the same. We decided not to take them back to our program and to talk to the school about it. But they said they knew nothing about it and that that's an excuse for not wanting to go to school... They are both due to start going to the first grade this September.

But since none of them past school testing, they might be going through one more year of regular pre-school program.

Within the program we were also trying to expand our activities also outside the school itself, so the contact with their peers, once they start with the formal education, would be easier (children's theatre, zoo visit, park walks and trips to the nature).

2. Catch-up Program

This activity has been running every day starting at 10 pm finishing at 1.30 pm. The age of the children is between 7 and 15.

The program that is performed by one Roma and one Macedonian teacher, is based on the following subjects:

- Macedonian language/Alphabet
- Math
- Environment and Society
- Arts and crafts
- Gym
- Music

This group of children/youngsters is made of those who had some previous experience with the school (usually a year or two of formal school participation) and those who never attended school. There for the whole school concept process took some time as well, just like in the case of the kindergarten/pre-school program.

Throughout the year we did try hard to offer to these children some basic knowledge, but at the same time also spent the time thinking, what kind of future can we provide for them. Those who never started with the formal education have mostly reached the age when they can't start with formal education any more (going from first grade up). And the ones who have been once enrolled, but because of various reasons dropped out, have been out of school for too long to go back to either second/third/fourth grade etc.

We're aware that the most important thing however is to start working on the reasons why they dropped out or why they never started going to school... But this issue is far to big for an NGO to deal or further more – solve it.

Let alone these reasons, we managed to create a group of children who would visit this program for whatever reasons – to get away from the street, look for some warmth, kindness and friendship, learn, write, perform, sing and create with us.

In case of this group, the problem with Macedonian language – when it came to speaking it – wasn't such a big problem. When it came to writing it, it became the whole new world to them. Their concentration was on a very low level. But slowly, with the introduction of the schoolwork, their interest for getting knowledge was increasing.

There were also problems with the socialization. Their mutual communication was not working, communication was very often based on shouting, sometimes pushing each other and arguing. In most cases children weren't aware of the school/classroom practices and the relationship to the teacher. Hygiene habits were also on a very low level.

Since the children are from different age groups but with very different knowledge background and learning ability, we split them up depending on that criteria. Being aware that children are mainly illiterate, we started "Macedonian language classes" with using first grade program, based on learning to read and write. The beginning of the classes showed us very soon that motor skills of most of the children were not developed properly, so our first task was to teach them how to hold pencil properly. Together we were drawing straight, diagonal and round lines and after that we continued with teaching them alphabet letters. The most important thing was constant repeating, which was in cases of those who were missing too much not working out well. But during the long process of learning the alphabet, some of them have already started to put the letters together and make the words. Once they knew the alphabet fairly, we proceeded with some reading and sentences writing.

It is important to emphasize that our catch-up program has in fact been more like "general literacy" program and that it was quite open for all the children of that age group. We came to terms to realize that these children, no matter of their age, are quite disorientated. Not only that they don't know how to read and write, most of them had no clue where they were from, which city or country they live, in some cases they were not even sure of their age... They indeed needed some basic introduction to the world around them, not Klanica, they had too much of that already. They also had too much of taking care of their younger siblings and watching Latin-American soap operas on TV, listening to the concerns of the older ones and having no time to enjoy their childhood. We started to question ourselves, what must it be like to grow up without being able to read some of our favourite children stories, not going to the cinema or children's shows, not having Santa bring you presents, not going on vacations...

We decided to include more and more of the whole experience of the real childhood in our program. After all, even at the age of 14, they were somehow eager of just being children. We started with the story-readings, also watching the favourite cartoons/films on tapes. Once a week children had tasks of narrating one of the stories that was previously read to them. At the beginning they didn't have much interest or concentration to listen to the story till the end. But as the time passed by, they managed to build up their concentration. We were very pleased to notice that they were showing more and more interest in certain characters from the books/films, their faith and whereabouts... Most of all, that they were slowly starting with narrating stories on their own. This of course was a great progress, since we had to keep in mind that they don't have "reading stories to them" history or concept from home.

We also organized visits to the zoo and some museums, planetarium and nature, and we had Santa Clause coming to our school for the New Year's and bringing presents to each of them! In addition to this event, it's necessary to add, that when they were making their "new year's presents wishes", most of the girls, even the teenagers, wanted Santa to bring them – a doll, and most of the boys wished for a racing car.

Inside school program we developed the verbal communication and interaction (raising hands if you know the answer, making questions by using whole sentences etc.). Besides all the alphabet letters, they learned the marks of punctuation: full stop, comma, semi colon, question mark, exclamation mark etc. As well as the usage of the capital letters, dividing into syllables, making full sentences and also writing short essays.

Concerning Math, with the help of "Math Schoolbook" for first grade, Math volume 1,2, they learned some math's basics. They mainly already knew how to count to 10 and also how to write numbers from one to ten, but improved that knowledge with being able to count to beyond 10.000. This was followed by addition and subtraction, which they loved and always had lots of fun with. They learned about geometrical figures like triangle, circle, square and rectangle and also about geometrical bodies like cube, oblong, cylinder etc. Then logic relations like left right, back-forward, under-above, bigger smaller, between which we were practicing a lot in pairs.

Our program gave them introduction to issues concerning hygiene and its importance in human life. Also food habits and the importance of healthy living for human's mind and body. They were learning about time and topics such as: the cosmos, globe, air, sun, water, soil, fruits and vegetables, traffic, home animals, safety living etc. All of this was important for them to understand their place in the world and in time.

One of their favourite activities however was Art class. The children's desire for drawing and painting existed from the very beginning. We started with "free topics", the goal was recognizing their art abilities and their imagination. We became aware quite soon that their ability to draw is not

adequate for their age. Most of them were drawing pictures that would normally be adequate for a 4-5 year old child. At the beginning they also had little patience for creating their own art pieces and were far too self-critical. Sometime that activity would end up even in tears over not being able to make the drawing or art-piece "beautiful" enough. Our international volunteer from New Zealand Anna Dalzel came exactly at the right time. She was an artist with lots of experiences with working with marginalized children. Her patience and commitment for bringing out the artistic side of each individual made children fully realize the meaning of art, the process and the creation of the art making.

Our Art class also included learning about some art elements like: form, lines, shape, colour and art principles like contrast and rhythm. There was certainly big interest and the result was many creative drawings that were hanging all over the walls from our school. As the program was continuing and the weather conditions improving, we were more and more combining this particular activity with our free activity program. The same goes for our gym class, which aim was gaining habit of doing regular exercises. We were lucky to have our school supplied with quite a lot of practical sports material and equipment. That gave us a large scale of indoor and outdoor sport possibilities. We also combined sport and relaxation time with the music and dancing. The children are so fond of singing and dancing that we had to include that as a free time activity. But we did manage to teach them lots of Macedonian songs. They were learning and understanding the music tasks immediately and one of their favourite ones was working on children songs, learning songs by hearing and improvisation.

To sum it up - our catch-up program turned out to be a great activity, even though we're still not quite sure what the real perspective of it is. Of course it's great for the kids who participate in it get the basic knowledge, learn and improve their Macedonian, literate themselves etc. But in terms of further education, regarding their age there's so many obstacles. We're also aware that many of the children from that group, especially the teenage ones, will be married soon. That's how it still goes inside that community and they might become parents very soon. We still keep encouraging those, who have a desire to get some sort of a profession. One possibility is to get them to evening school where they can get a certificate and proceed with obtaining some further practical profession such us driver, hairdresser, floweriest, cook etc. That might be the only option for those from our catch-up program. Because in reality, there's only few Klanica children who dropped out of school and then the following year went back. Our experience so far was, that the children at some point either stop going to state school permanently (reasons are mainly financial or the family moves somewhere else), or they never even start going.

3. Tutoring

The concept of tutoring classes is to provide two hours per day, three times per week (Monday, Wednesday and Friday), available time for getting extra help for those children who already attend primary Macedonian school. The help include improving children's condition at the school, rising up their motivation for learning and getting knowledge, encourage them for everyday attending school and showing the importance of education.

Starting from March 31st 2003 till the end of the EFEKC educational program for this school year tutoring classes are running continuously with little changes in the group of children who attended the tutoring classes. There was different kind of activities, such as: solving mathematic problems and practicing the difficult tasks, group and individual reading and writing, group and individual learning lessons, helping for their homework and talking about different problems at the school or at home. The children felt comfortable to come and to participate in the tutoring classes, which was one of the aims in the tutoring in general. The second aim was to provide as much creative and useful activities as can, and the third aim was to satisfied children's needs.

At the beginning, most of the children were coming to do their homework. From one side, that was acceptable with excuse that the children don't have any available space to do their homework at home, because most of their houses have only one or two rooms, and that they need a help or assistance for doing the homework. From other side, wasn't acceptable, because the idea of having tutoring classes doesn't mean having "doing homework" classes. Therefore at the very beginning there were lot of conversations classes between the tutor and the children about the idea of tutoring in general, how it can help them, what can they expect and what can they receive from the tutoring classes. But in the end we managed to set up some form of the activity that would be acceptable for all of us.

Most of the time however was dedicated to Macedonian language and Math tasks. The children who were coming to get tutoring were formed into three different groups: Macedonian, Math and Other. Later we also created the fourth one: English.

The Macedonian group has been doing lots of group book reading and the dictations. Special focus was the essay writing, since some upper graders had to prepare a report on the novels they have been reading. With the assistance of our tutor they were repeating the basic rules of the essay writing and before they handed the paper to their teacher, out tutor usually had a look at it

As it goes for the Math problems we have been mostly dealing with the unfinished maths exercises. The "Other" group was coming to the activity

with different questions, also personal problems they were dealing with at school or at home... Sometimes there was a real discussion about their growing up going on. Of course the children knew that all of their problems can't be solved but they felt comfortable to speak about it in front of the tutor. That brings an idea to make very creative, interesting and serious plan for tutoring classes.

In May 2004 - nearly at the end of the school year, the youngsters started to come with more and more school tasks. The problems were coming from not understanding the concept of some lessons and difficulties to solve some math's tasks. Repeating and preparing for the tests, our tutor was paying more and more visits to their homes.

For Klanica children who're going to regular school this is definitely very precious activity. Unfortunately not all the children who would need that sort of assistance are coming. The problem is that for this activity we don't provide transportation, so that means that they have to walk for Klanica to our day centre (30 minutes walk). There for lots of them prefer our tutor to come to their houses and in the future we might consider that option as a practice.

Through EFEKC we continued to support and monitor regularity in attendance of the children who are going to regular school.

4. Free Activities

These activities are performed twice a week for the children from our Catchup classes and are performed by an international project assistant that has previous experiences in similar projects. The purpose of the activities is providing an opportunity for some pleasure time, when child can create, construct, exchange, collaborate, and learn to be part of a team.

To accomplish the goals that we have determined with this activity, we work at school and inside Klanica.

Objectives:

- Favouring group-dynamic by developing solidarity and collaboration
- Favouring responsibility and ability of choice by letting child choose his/her role in time of "free activities"
- Developing creativity, sense for concentration
- Favouring exchange
- Favouring environment, learning about different materials
- Respecting the life-rhythm of the child

For creating our free activities program, we usually used the accessible material and equipment. With the cooperation of the Catch-up program teachers, we managed a great deal to combine lots of our free activities with their program. This past month we focused some more on the life that surrounds the children. As we mentioned before, their life is quite isolated and sometimes we realize that they're unaware of the bigger aspect of it and their participation...

Let us just mention some of the most successful activities we had:

1. Visiting the Museum of Nature History.

The visit was organized for better understanding of the human environment, including some man's history, the earth materials, flora and fauna, the conditions on the earth etc. The walk around the museum was one big lesson, where we could show and explain to the children the material about animals, birds, insects and plants that they have been learning during the Catch-up classes. We insisted for active observation and better memorizing with the aim to learn more and to be able to use the knowledge. After the visiting we talked to the children about the museum and drew some of the objects that we saw. We were proud of their focus and behavior.

2. Trips to the nature (hill Vodno, the city park, walk around the town)

With the first sun we took the children to the nearby hill called Vodno. There was lots of uphill walking, but it was worth it, because most of them have never seen the city from up the hill perspective. We were identifying the buildings, searching for specific locations such as their neighbourhood, the school, the park, the river etc. This trip gave them the whole new perception of their town. The uphill trip was also used to get some fresh air and some outdoor exercises. This experience was combined with the Catch-Up topic introducing them the world map and the globe. They were locating themselves: Me-Skopje-Macedonia-Europe.

They were looking for neighbouring countries, we were talking about mountains and oceans, the world structure and the planet earth. It was obvious that the "bigger picture" was something quite new to them, but it left them thinking...

Couple of our trips were also used for just observing the nature and picking up some stones and flowers. We also had a picnic, which was their suggestion. We took with us our school lunch, and they also brought some fruits and candies from home. The trips to the nature were also meant for the to observe and understand the changes of the nature better.

One of the biggest improvements with these trips was that the children are already better in understanding the "rules" of the behaviour in the group and in the public places. This is a very big progress. Some of the children could sometimes still get a bit stubborn with the coordinators plan or some discipline rules outside the school. But generally they understood, that certain behaviour in the public isn't tolerated.

For the children who don't come to our program we organised a walk by the Vardar river that runs through Klanica. We tried to make them aware why the river is running faster sometimes (when the snow is melting or when there's lots of rain), why the snow is melting, and why there're more birds in spring then during the winter. Some of them also joined us for our mask-ball at the city park.

3. Creative Art Workshops

Art activities are one of the most presence activities in this part of the project's program. We are trying to put the children's creativity on first place and to give them opportunity to express them selves organizing different art activities.

One of our more successful workshops was making of Chinese chandeliers and umbrellas from the paper. We began every of the workshops with demonstrating what we were doing and how. We used thread and wooden sticks and it was lots of fun. They were cutting and painting all paper's parts and gluing them together to make beautiful chandeliers. The excitement was visible on their faces when the chandeliers were done. They were proud that they could make some thing so beautiful with using their creativity and patience.

Another very successful workshop was making of decorative branches. The activity started with collecting some characteristic branches and bringing them to school. Then we made little sculptures connecting the branches with the basis. The result was lovely little sculptures made by natural branches and children were satisfied of their work. Then we connected this activity with art class from catch – up classes and used the sculptures to paint it with warm and cold colors. The children were very creative and the new result was colorful little sculptures that decorated our educational day center.

5. Parental Involvement

Parallel with implementing the school-activities for the children, we have been working on making a strategy for successful parent program/education that would include school/parent partnership and parent empowerment.

We knew most of the children's parents already from the beginning of the project. And we had regular contacts with them through our two Roma assistants (translator and the driver). These two were usually the ones who would pick up the children from Klanica and meet/talk to them on every day basis. We also had most of the information/news about what was going on with them through our two Roma colleagues. But when we invited them to out first parental meeting, there were only two of them who actually appeared. The reasons for not coming were mostly work, or that the school was too far, or that they simply didn't have time... We decided to keep contacts with them with coming to Klanica for a while and when necessary organize a "big meeting" and bring them to school with our car/van.

After we got to know the children from the program better we established that the need of more constructive dialog with the children's parents is increasing. Dialog in Klanica was with some of the parents successful, but as soon we would mention coming to school or taking more active part in their children's education/school program, many of them would start looking for reasons why that isn't possible (poverty, parent's illiteracy, language barrier, fear etc.) and the attitude of rejection toward us would appear. We started to question how serious was their intention to send their children – at least the pre-school ones, to regular school. In most cases they were saying that would be a "very good idea", but it's just such a big deal, financially and as the full time obligation.

Conditions for Roma education in Macedonia (and we believe elsewhere in Eastern Europe) are generally difficult. Roma child, especially if it comes from such a marginalized place as Klanica is, is labelled from the first step when she/he walks through the door of the mainstream school.

Through our conversation with the Klanica parents we tried to show lots of understanding towards their fears and negative attitude towards the majority school system. But we didn't want that to be used as an excuse for choosing for their children street life and poverty instead and were all the time very determined, that some of their frustrations and the real problems can be solved with the cooperation with us and our program.

We've started thinking about creating the whole sub-program, which would focus and target exclusively the parents. That would definitely increase the need of getting involved more Roma mediators in our program and we have been discussing about that a lot.

Till the end of our pilot project, we managed to find some effective ways, how to get parents in the program more successfully. One of them - since our day-centre is dislocated from Klanica, is to provide transportation for them to bring them to school. Also we provided school material for the children who're entering the state school in September, and told the parents about it. That had a strong impact on them. The problem how to make it possible for

the children to stay in the school, remains. Education is a long process and the ways how they can be helped financially, have to be found.

Another very big issue however is the attitudes of the state school towards Roma students. Our organisation has had previous communication with "Braka Miladinovci" school, which in this case is the nearest school to Klanica. But the school's rejection towards Klanica children has always strongly existed. Starting with the school enrolment of Klanica children, they have been claiming that children from the other side of the river don't belong to "their" region and there for have to go to other school (which in this case is about three miles away). We visited school many times and had meetings with the school director. They were always determined that they're flexible enough towards Roma students.

There for, our next step was to invite the parents of the children who reached school age and who have through our program became ready for the school enrolment (kindergarten and pre-school program children), and discuss with them openly about the enrolment procedure, what needs to be done, obstacles and how can we help them... But most importantly, to determine if there's intention of sending their child to school, how serious is the intention etc. Before hand our Roma translation has started working on making report on each parent comments and questions about her/his child's education...

It was great to see that all of the parents – mothers to be exact, came to school to discuss their children's future. At this stage of our program they have been pressured very hard to take part and cooperate with us, so it was very difficult to say, whether they came to the meeting to please us or they were thinking of enrolling their child to school. Our kindergarten teacher made an introduction about education and why's it important to educate their/our children. Also that it's their obligation to send their children to school. We also talked about the hygiene and the regularity, because these are to crucial problems we/they're dealing with when it comes to Roma inclusion into state education (lack of hygiene was one of the strongest comments of the director of "Braka Miladinovci" school for rejection of Klanica children at their school).

They of course had many questions, concerns and fears. Since we were quite prepared for all the possible questions from their side we could provide them many of the answers, at least the ones regarding the school enrolment. We also invited a social worker from NGO "Mobility" who is working with marginalized groups and she had vast knowledge with the administrative procedures of getting registration papers and ID's (many of Klanica people don't have valid documentation), also medical records and possibilities of free state medical check-ups and vaccinations necessary for first grade enrolment.

As expected, they insisted on enrolling their children to "Braka Miladinovci", and the possibility of enrolling their child to an one hour walking distance "other school" was in no case acceptable. Since some of them are illiterate we helped them fill in the applications forms for school-kindergarten enrolment and advised them about some basic procedures. We even engaged to go to school with them if it's going to be necessary...

We believe that the meeting was of a big success, since all of the parents have already started with preparing and arranging necessary documents for the school enrolment. After that we also learned that some of them also made the "big step" of going to school and enrolling their child. One of the girls from our program – Kibarije, has already been to first grade testing and has a good chance of start going to state school from September.

Parental involvement is vital in the children's progress. Within this type of Roma communities education is not so valued and children don't receive much encouragement and support to attend school from their parents. There for we're aware that for a successful realization of our program it's crucial to establish as strong relations as possible with the parents and to include them, even though as it shows that is one of the hardest task. But that's the only alternative. Only with recognizing children's potential and presenting it to their parents we might encourage Klanica parents for enrolling their children in regular schools.

VI. Expected and Accomplished Results:

It's understandable that for realization at least of two of the expected results takes long-term involvement and commitment with Klanica. But the influence is there and we set up well-structured program that can be developed further. One of the important results, as we see them now, is that we managed to design an educational model for education of Klanica children. We didn't only create the day educational centre, but also establish communication with all the relevant factors/subjects in that process. That model was promoted within Klanica community and it can be demonstrated for any future activities. When we recognized the problems with enrolling Klanica children to "Braka Miladinovci" school, we involved professionals fro Roma Law Centre to monitor our talks/negotiations with the school management.

We believe that with our program we managed to keep many children away from the street. We also manage to influence their parents to let them be children and work on changing the "smacking and hitting" them way of communication.

Our day centre can in the future become a preparatory centre for Roma children's state school inclusion. Also literacy and advisory centre for the

ones who didn't go or complete primary school but would like to have some profession...

In our plan/proposal of the project we determined six overall expected results of the program. At the end of the pilot, we are strongly positive that we reached all of them.

The evaluation of expected results:

1.) Minority children will enter the Macedonian school system.

In our kindergarten/pre-school group we had eight potential "school candidates".

- -Kibarije Ramadani (b.d. 29.04.1996): at the age of eight, this fall it's her last chance to enter first grade state school. She was regular in our program, parents are determined to enrol her (it's not quite clear why they missed last year's school enrolment), she was taken to school testing to "Braka Miladinovci" school with her mother and our international coordinator. Due to pedagogue's negative approach she lost concentration on a test and didn't reach good points. At the moment it's not clear whether she'll start with the first grade in September, or will be put in the regular school kindergarten program.
- Serdzan Ali (b.d. 8.05.1997): she's supposed to enter first grade. We successfully negotiated with the "Braka Miladinovci" school her enrolment, even though they were claiming that she's from the other side of the river which doesn't belong under their school region.
- Sultan Krasnici (b.d. 20.11.1997): same case as Serdzan Ali. Will eventually enter "Braka Miladinovci" school in September.
- Sibela Idris (b.d. 29.03.1998): successfully enrolled into "Braka Miladinovci" kindergarten program.
- Monika Tair (b.d. 09.06.1998): successfully enrolled into "Braka Miladinovci" kindergarten program.
- Alisa Alim (b.d. 03.05.1998): successfully enrolled into "Braka Miladinovci" kindergarten program.
- -Almadeta Ali (b.d. 07.02.1998): successfully enrolled into "Braka Miladinovci" kindergarten program.
- Dzijan Redzepovski (b.d. 13.05.1997): successfully enrolled into "Braka Miladinovci" kindergarten program

- Serdzana Dinoli (b.d. 21.09.1996): she comes from a Kosovo refugee family and has no identification papers necessary for the school enrolment. We're working closely with her family for solving that problem and getting her to school in September, because this year is her last chance to start with the state education.

There's also two girls: Fatime Memeti and Zarife Memeti, who started with the "Braka Miladinovci" kindergarten program last year and are due to start going to first grade this fall.

From our Catch-Up classes there's been 9 children from last year who made it back to school. For this year we still have to talk with the school to take three of them back. But in this case they already missed two school years, so it's going to be very difficult.

2.) Minority children that normally would not receive instruction and encouragement will receive instruction that will allow them to recognize and reach their potential.

Through our activities we believe that Klanica children got a great chance and a full support necessary for their creativity and their desire for learning and experiencing. This is most obvious from seeing them coming to our program regularly, and getting to understand what their role was in the program. Also to enjoy creating and to be motivated to observe the life around them with different eyes. They were encouraged as individuals with the future perspective of becoming someone and maybe being able to step out of the circle of isolation and discrimination. However, for seeing the real results of this expected longer period of time and commitment is necessary.

3.) A community that is suspicious of the school system because of past exclusion will learn the importance of education.

Longer term of involvement is also necessary to fully determine these results. We think that the best way of showing them that we're working "on their side", was our contact and persistence with "Braka Miladinovci" school. Most of the parents knew we were discussing the real problems there and were serious in solving them in their benefit.

One other important thing is seeing their children learning something in our program. Coming home singing a new song or bringing art work they made by themselves at our school..,

4.) Minority children, whether they enter school or not, will learn the language necessary for commerce and interrelation in Macedonia.

Since our focus was overcoming the language barrier, the Klanica children were provided by full time attention in learning Macedonian. The awareness

that some of the children are already working (especially boys) and are selling the collected recyclable material at Komuna, we gave them a good knowledge about money and the value of bank notes.

5.) Minority children will improve language, reading, and writing skills.

We fully accomplished that. But again, the work is far from being completed.

6.) Minority children will be influenced by the presence of Soncogledi/BSF international and Macedonian staff and volunteers: they may learn the concept of volunteering and participate in further BSF programs.

The best example of achieving this result is definitely the presence of our international Ana Dalzel from New Zealand. She developed a very close relationship with the children through drawing portraits of every child and doing all sorts of fun creative and artistic workshops. She was also spending lots of her time in Klanica playing with them and was also living with one of the families for a while. She fascinated children a lot with her character. They were inspired by her art, and they all wanted to become artists. Since she was from New Zealand, they were also learning about her country and the way living is there... Even though she left in November 2003 (she was part of the program for over two months), the children were mentioning, drawing and talking about Ana till the end of the program. With Ana the bigger children learned some English and they decided to write her a letter to New Zealand. The smaller ones sent her some of their art-work which will be exhibited at school in Ana's home town. At the same time children from a local school in Christchurch will send their art-work to our school with the letters for our children... So Ana contributed to the program as the whole concept of friendship outside Macedonia and her being with us and volunteering for us inspired the children. Because they all want to "be Ana" when they grow up.

VI. Conclusions and Suggestions:

Problems related to Roma education cannot be limited only to issues arising within the education system. In order to understand them it is necessary to take into consideration the general status of the minority group, its cultural and social disadvantages and the relation between the Roma population and the majority. Long-term Roma exclusion from different aspects of life, including education, has created mistrust and doubts from both sides: the schools and the Roma themselves. Such a condition however is impossible to overcome with only through NGO work, but through a joint need for constructive strategy for Roma inclusion.

However, since one of the biggest obstacles to education for Roma is overcoming non-mother tongue, we believe that programs like ours are the only way to prepare the children for successful school entry. It gives the preschool children time to become part of something structured, especially in case of Klanica children, whose lives are unorganised and limited to basic survival. One of the biggest issues to focus on and deal with in the future is also changing the practice of the state school, which is - when it comes to Roma children with Macedonian language difficulties - sending them to school for the children with special needs.

Increasing parental support for children's participation is one of the most important next steps within our program. Through our activities and involvement in the Klanica community our good communication with the people living there is fully established. We're still looking for ways of improving it, but so far have increased their trust and cooperation. This is all very helpful in further presentation of the Roma problems that would stimulate positive public attitudes towards the Roma integration. However, during the pilot project we recognised an extensive need of getting involved more of trained and skilled Roma mediators especially when it comes to communication with the parents. We established some contacts with various Roma NGO's and they're willing to help.

Through our contacts with the parents we established who're the ones with more awareness for their children's education. We're positive that we can work closer with those and they might be quite helpful with influencing some other parents. For example the school enrolment is quite of a procedure and the parents are uneducated themselves so they don't think they're capable of going through that. Instead of us going to school with them, in the future there might be someone from the parents who can assist to others.

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- 3. Denars 1,079.50 for the period from 01.07.2003-30.09.2003
- 4. Denars 917.50 for the period from 01.10.2003-31.12.2003

Skopje, 11.08.2004

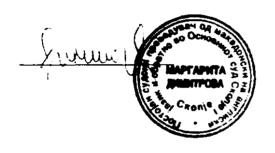
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Margarita Dimitrova, sworn court translator

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Маргарита Димитрова, овластен судски преведувач



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ПОТВРДА

ИЗВОЗНА И КРЕДИТНА БАНКА АД, Скопје потврдува дека на **ФОСИМ- УСАИД2** со сметка број **27000000161974** отворена во Банката на 19.02.2003 година на име пасивна камата за 2003 година исплатено е:

- 1. за период од 01.01.2003-31.03.2003 износ од 100,50 денари
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- 3. за период од 01.07.2003-30.09.2003 износ од 1.079,50 денари
- 4. за период од 01.10.2003-31.12.2003 износ од 917,50 денари

Скопје, 11.08.2004 година

Дирекција за платен промет во земјата

12 12

Enabling Formal Education for Klanica Children Grant No. 165-G-00-03-00101-00

Date: 16,08,2004

Interest income for 2004 transfered in favour of account FOSIM-USAID 2

Period	Denars	US\$
01,01,2003-31,03,2003	100,50	1,77
01,04,2003-30,06,2003	1.198,00	22,14
01,07,2003-30,09,2003	1.079,50	20,79
01,10,2003-31,12,2003	917,50	18,53
Total	3.295,50	63,23

Ljiljana Ristevska Accounting Manager Foundation Open Society Institute Macedonia

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- 2. Denars 4.50 for the period from 01.04.2004-30.06.2004

Skopje, 11.08.2004

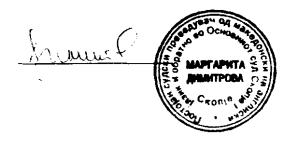
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Маргарита Димитрова, овластен судски преведувач







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- 1. за период од 01.01.2004-31.03.2004 износ од 1.095,00 денари
- 2. за период од 01.04.2004-30.06.2004 износ од 4,50 денари

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Дирекција за платен промет во земјата

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EXPORT & CREDIT BANK, Inc., Skopje certifies that the account of FOSIM-USAID2 number 27000000161974 opened in the Bank on 19. 02. 2003 is closed on 11.08.2004 on the request of the Foundation since the project for the purposes of which the account was opened, is completed.

Skopje, 12.08.2004

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Маргарита Димитрова, овластен судски преведувач



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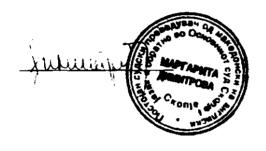
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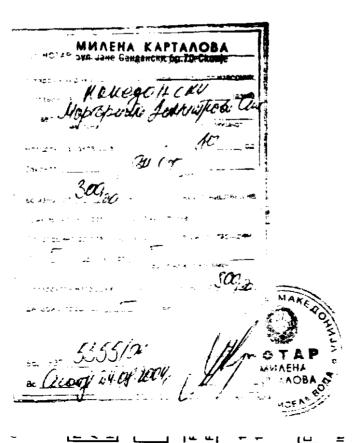
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Маргарита Димитрова, овластен судски преведувач







ПОТВРДА

ИЗВОЗНА И КРЕДИТНА БАНКА АД, Скопје потврдува дека сметката број 27000000161974 на ФОСИМ-УСАИД2 отворена во Банката на 19.02.2003 година е затворена на ден 11.08.2004 година по барање на Фондацијата а. поради затворање на проектот за кој беше отворена сметката.

Скопје, 12.08.2004 година

Дирекција за платен промет во земјата

ИЗВОЗНА И КРЕДИТИА БАНКА АД. ОКОПЈЕ

Печатено: 11.08.2004

Страна:

1. / 1.

накозна и кредитна ванка АД, Скопо

ИЗВОД Бр. 27 ЗА ПРОМЕНИТЕ И СОСТОЈБАТА НА СРЕДСТВАТА НА СМЕТКАТА **27000000161974** НА ДЕН **11.08.2004**

назив:

GOCHM-USAID 2

Адреса:

Бул. Јане Сандански 111

Седиште: СКОПЈЕ

Телефон:444488

100

Тел-фах:444499

Фах: 073

Матичен број:

2/0000000161974 5332095

D

Даночен:

Број:

4030999370170

Претх.состојба

Должи

Побарува

Нова состојба

E-mailapaneva@soros.org.mk

Број на налози:

Одобрува

124.565,50

124.565,50

0,00

0,00

Задолжува

P6p. Реф.Бр. Име на сметката

шиф. плак.

Цел на дознака

префрлање на средства

Должи

Пов.бр.(задолж.) Побарува

Број на сметка

124,565,50

Пов.бр.(одобр.)

ФОНДАЦИЈА ИНСТИТУТ ОТВОРЕНО ОПШТЕСТВО 01092211

270000000105617

930

Вкупно денари:

124.565,50

0,00

Почитувани,

Со задоволство Ве известуваме дека, почнувајќи од 19.07.2004 год. ќе можете да ги користите новите услуги на електронските сервиси на платниот промет во земјата на ИК БАНКА АД. Скопје. За подетални информации посетете ја нашата web страна www.ikbanka.com.mk.

Со почит,

Дирекција за платен промет во земјата